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SERVICE QUALITY:

AN INTRODUCTION

BY
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Service Quality B.C.

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Introduction

The purpose of this booklet, *"Service Quality: An Introduction,"* is to introduce public servants to some of the latest and best ideas about Service Quality as they apply to the public sector. We hope that it will act as a catalyst for the growth of a Service Quality culture throughout the British Columbia government. We also hope that it will give new information and more ideas to those who are already familiar with Service Quality concepts.

Examples of Service Quality activities from the public sector have been used throughout the text whenever possible. We are grateful for the many British Columbia examples which were submitted by our Service Quality champions from across government. We are particularly appreciative of the suggestions for improvement to the text which were offered by members of the Service Quality Coordinators Council, especially Faye Schmidt, Fred Leonard, Dennis Kent, Gil Blair and Ben Cator. Many of their suggestions have been used in this edition. Special thanks also to Suzanne Creighton who assisted with the production through all its stages.

You are our customers. We value your comments and look forward to hearing from you about how we can improve this service to you. This is a "living document" and your suggestions will be used to ensure continuous improvement in future editions.

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March, 1991.

What is Service Quality?

Service Quality is a combination of two movements:

- **Service**, which means knowing what the customer[1] wants and satisfying that need;
- **Quality**, which means doing it right the first time, and continually improving the product and the service.

Service Quality embodies the best of the **Service management** movement and the best of the **Quality management** movement.

Taxpayers and customers have made it clear that they want both high quality and good service and are pressuring for it. In the private sector, dissatisfied customers take their business elsewhere, while in the public sector, complaints to politicians and public managers are common, as taxpayers express their dissatisfaction with the quality of government services.

... I'VE TRIED EVERY ONE OF THESE LIPSTICKS, AND NOT ONE OF THEM MADE ME LOOK BETTER!

[1]Some public servants will be more familiar with the term "client" when referring to those for whom they provide service. The term "customer " is used throughout this booklet to avoid confusion. Other terms can, however, be readily substituted to meet the reader's special needs.

Public agencies and private companies which have adopted the Service Quality concepts have been able to increase customer satisfaction even within the constraints of existing resources. In fact, the application of these concepts by staff have often reduced production costs.

Privatization, tax resistance, pressure groups and public complaints are all signs of "dissatisfied customers." At the same time, taxpayers are demanding more for less from their governments. They want improved services and lower taxes.

> *"Government must now respond to a public which, although it demands new services, has made it clear that it will not accept tax increases."*
>
> *- Hon. Brian Burke*
> *Premier of Western Australia*

The need for Service Quality

"One of the changes in management tasks will be a major thrust towards systematic management in the public service institution - whether government agency, hospital, school or university. Indeed, the frontier of management in the next half century is likely to be the public service institution, just as the frontier of management in the last fifty years was in business enterprise."

-Peter Drucker
Author and Management Consultant

"Despite negative views of government, and despite austerity, expectations of government are not diminishing. On the contrary, the changing social and economic climate is fuelling public expectations for improved service."

- Government of Canada
Public Service 2000 Report

"One of today's great challenges for a public organization is maintaining a strong client orientation in the face of restraint, staff turnover, outmoded values, and an increasingly competitive and customer-oriented private sector."

- Victor Rocine
Principal
Coopers & Lybrand
Consulting Group

With a new emphasis on service, innovative public and private sector organizations have responded to customers' demands by shifting to a quality-focused, customer- service style of management. They have successfully turned their organizations into centres which provide better service within existing resources. Moving towards higher levels of Service Quality will mean learning from these organizations and building a Service Quality culture across all of government, where highly valued staff are trained to meet the needs of customers, in an efficient and consistent fashion at all times.

Some interesting facts about Service

"Among the best in the public sector, the customer is identified and made central to all affairs.... A quality revolution will allow [the public sector organization] to have its cake and eat it too: improve service delivery and cut its costs simultaneously."

- Tom Peters
Author and Management Consultant

- 96 percent of unhappy customers do not complain.
- The average customer who has a problem with an organization will tell 9 to 10 others about it.
- Customers who have complained to an organization and had their complaints satisfactorily resolved, tell an average of five others about the treatment they received.

- Research Institute of America
Technical Assistance
Research Program
(TARP) Study, 1985.

According to a study by the Auditor General of Canada, well-performing government organizations have a strong client orientation:

> *"Instead of focusing on a hierarchy and on the authority that rules the hierarchy, people in the well-performing organizations focus on client needs and preferences. People in the organization derive their satisfaction from serving the client, rather than from serving the bureaucracy. Interaction is strong within the organization, but it is perhaps even stronger between the organization and its clients."*
>
> *- Otto Brodtrick*
> *Principal*
> *Office of the Auditor*
> *General of Canada*

.. THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!

Some interesting facts about Quality

- Customers increasingly demand high quality in all aspects of the output they receive.
- The customers' perceptions of an organization are based on the quality of both the products and the services they receive.
- In forming their overall impressions of an organization and in assessing their level of satisfaction, customers do not differentiate between the quality of the product and of the service they receive.
- Any flaw in any aspect of the package will be generalized to the entire output of the organization.

- The Conference Board of Canada

Dr. W. Edwards Deming, renowned leader of the Quality movement, points out that 15 to 40 percent of a North American manufacturer's costs is consumed by waste embedded in the product. This includes waste of human effort and waste of machine time when errors and defects have to be corrected at the end of the production line. The accompanying frustration created by unnecessarily reworking, editing, and correcting system and process defects, compounds the inefficiency. We can all think of examples within our own government organizations.

The key Quality concepts are:

- Do it right the first time,
- Zero defects,
- Continuous improvement.

Understanding Service Quality:
The Concepts

The Quality Concepts

- Investing in quality improvement reduces costs and increases sales
- Doing things right the first time in manufacturing products (zero defects)
- Designing products to meet customers' needs
- Setting products standards
- Measuring performance

The Service Concepts

- Finding out what customers want
- Designing service to meet customers' needs
- Providing customers with extraordinary service
- Setting service standards
- Measuring service performance
- Empowering staff to meet customers' needs

Continually Improving
"Kaizen!!"

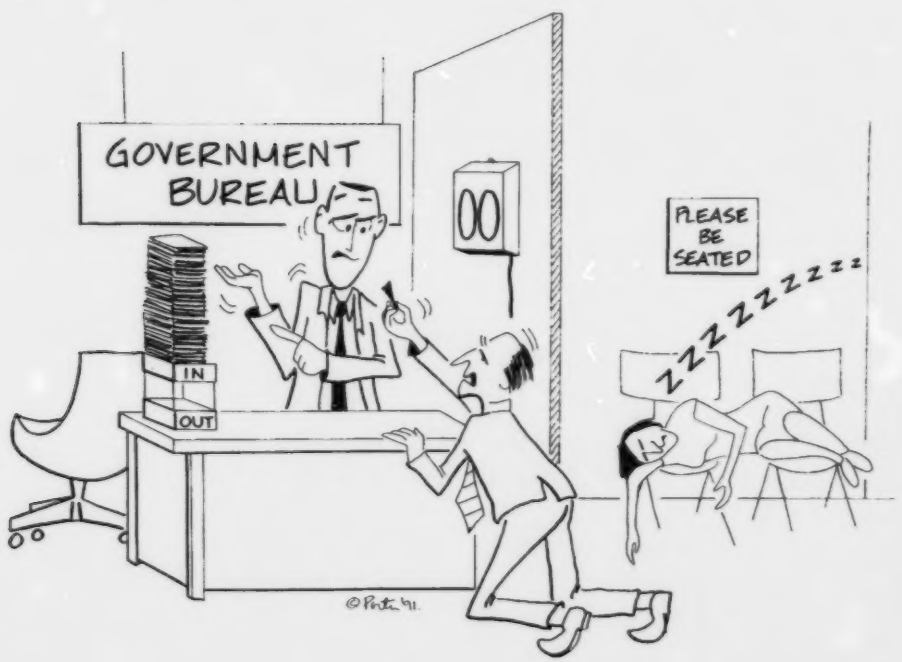
Key dimensions of client satisfaction

Market research in the private sector has uncovered five factors which capture what is important to customers. They include:

- **Reliability** - the ability to provide what was promised, dependably and accurately.
- **Assurance** - the knowledge and courtesy of employees, and their ability to convey trust and confidence.
- **Empathy** - the degree of caring and individual attention provided to customers.
- **Responsiveness** - the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
- **Tangibles** - the physical facilities and equipment and the appearance of staff.

"Let's face it, all too many departments treat clients as 'supplicants' rather than as customers."

- Victor Rocine
Principal
Coopers & Lybrand
Consulting Group



Government is in the service business

Did you know that...?

- **British Columbia Parks**
  There were a record 20.6 million visits to British Columbia Parks in 1989 (about the same number that visits DisneyWorld in Orlando, Florida, each year).

- **British Columbia, Vital Statistics Branch**
  The British Columbia Ministry of Health, Vital Statistics Branch, provided 25,154 marriage certificates and registered 43,525 live births in 1989.

- **British Columbia Ferries**
  The ferry system carried 19.2 million passengers and 7.5 million vehicles in 1989/90.

  The galley crew on a British Columbia ferry can serve meals to 1,210 passengers during a one-hour-and-thirty-five-minute crossing of the Strait of Georgia.

- **British Columbia, Recreational Fisheries Branch**
  The Recreational Fisheries Branch sold 395,412 angling licenses in 1988/89. Nearly 80 percent were sold to British Columbia residents. The branch also gives each angler an information booklet with the fishing rules and other interesting information about fishing.

  More than 83 tonnes of fish were produced in the provincial hatcheries in 1988/89.

  British Columbia hunters bought 455,830 hunting licenses in 1989/90. Non-residents bought 18,402 in the same year.

- **British Columbia, Government Personnel Services Division**
  Nearly 3,000 positions were advertised in "Postings" in 1990. "Postings" is distributed throughout the province to ensure that people know about jobs available in the British Columbia government.

- **British Columbia Place Stadium**
  Over 10 million customers used the stadium in the past three years.

  Popcorn sold by the stadium during the last three years could fill ten olympic-size swimming pools.

- **Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre**
  Over a quarter of a million visitors used the Centre in the past three years.

- **British Columbia, Registrar of Companies**
  In 1990, the Corporate Registry maintained files for 192,189 active British Columbia corporations, 14,315 "not-for-profit" societies, 101,229 partnerships and proprietorships and 518 cooperative associations.

  The staff conducted over 160,000 searches in 1990. There are approximately 385,000 files in the database.

- **British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority**
  As the third largest electric utility in Canada, B.C. Hydro serves almost 1.2 million customers in British Columbia, ranging from heavy industry to rural farms and suburban households.

  Approximately 70 percent of the service is provided for the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island areas.

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Education**
  A total of 513,533 children from Kindergarten to Grade 12 were taught in British Columbia schools in 1989.

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Tourism**
  There were approximately 14,640,000 visits to British Columbia in 1989.

  130,000 people have been trained in customer service skills through the ministry's "SuperHost" program.

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Transportation and Highways**
  The British Columbia highways network provides 42,105 kilometres of roads and rights-of-way for the public.

- **Royal British Columbia Museum**
  Approximately 59,743 children of school age visited the Museum in 1990. Approximately 856,244 people also visited the Museum's exhibit galleries during the same period.

- **British Columbia Assessment Authority**
  A total of 1,244,445 properties (residential, industrial, business and others) were assessed by the B.C. Assessment Authority in 1988.

- **British Columbia, Office of the Comptroller General**
  Approximately 750,000 payroll payments are made each year.

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Social Services and Housing**
  Approximately 150,000 GAIN (Guaranteed Available Income for those in Need) clients are assisted each month.

Do you know the size of the service provided by your organization to its external and internal customers?

"Service" in the public sector

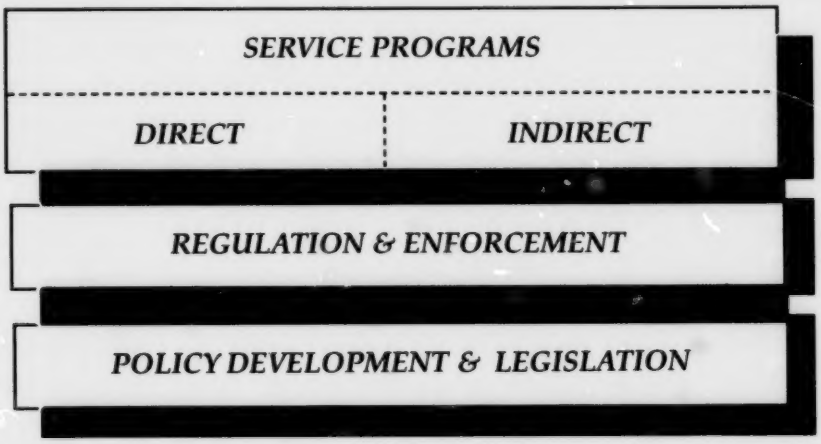
As public sector organizations move toward providing better Service Quality, they must anchor their strategies in the knowledge that, although public and private organizations are often similar, government service delivery is more complex.

PUBLIC SERVICE FUNCTIONS

The public service has three related and often overlapping service functions:

- **The service/"operations"** component, which sometimes resembles the private sector. It provides benefits to customers by transferring resources or information directly to the public, through various facilities such as schools, hospitals, parks, ferries, recreation and cultural centres, public health care and welfare services.
- **Regulatory and enforcement responsibilities**, which protect the public interest by imposing constraints, duties or obligations on citizens and institutions. These include collection of taxes and fines, detention and imprisonment, surveillance and supervision of citizens.
- **Development of policy proposals and legislation** to support ministers, and help achieve the objectives of the government. This includes the advice given to decision-makers and the drafting and revision of legislation to facilitate policy decisions.

THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE MODEL



Internal and external customers

Most people easily understand how direct service to the public fits with a Service Quality focus, but it is often difficult to accept the idea that Service Quality concepts make sense for organizations which have regulatory and control functions. "Service" in the regulatory context may be paradoxical. Prison inmates, for example, would be unlikely to think of their jailers as providing a service for them. In a less extreme way, many internal services, such as those offered by central agencies, regulate and oversee the activities of public servants who are, therefore, the recipients of the services the agencies provide. Many of these organizations have grappled with this dilemma and have redefined their roles. They now focus on the needs of their partners within government who deal directly with the public, in order to help them meet the needs of customers on the front line. These agencies can definitely be "partners in performance!"

Examples of public sector organizations which have successfully introduced the Service Quality style of management into regulatory environments include the following:

- **British Columbia, Purchasing Commission** began as a control agency with a mandate to control costs and regulate government purchasing. Today it focuses on its partners' needs, and develops procedures to meet those needs. The staff constantly strives to acquire the kinds and quality of materials public servants need to help them do a better job for their customers.
- **City of Calgary, Police Department** provides training to police officers which emphasizes the service role and the necessity of seeing the citizens of Calgary as their customers.
- **New York City, Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)** which has custody of two hundred juvenile detainees, takes pride in ensuring that the youngsters are safe and receive quality service. They have developed an after-care program which follows their customers back into the neighbourhoods to help them find jobs or return to school. This way they are reinstated into society after they leave the Centre. DJJ's aim is to have more youngsters in after-care than in custody.
- **British Columbia, Office of the Comptroller General** balances its control functions with a strong commitment to achieving "Excellence in Service."
- **Washington State, Department of Licensing** is committed to the principle that "Customer service is our highest priority."

"I can think of no corporation which has found a way of looking after external customers while abusing internal customers. The process of meeting customer needs begins internally."

- Tom Peters
Author and Management Consultant

Islands of excellence within the British Columbia government

Many groups throughout the British Columbia public service have embraced the principles of Service Quality and have found new and innovative ways to serve their internal and external customers. Some notable examples include:

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Parks'** mission of "Open Doors To Adventure" anchors its programs in a strong customer-service focus. It surveys its 20 million annual customers, who are the users of 390 provincial parks and 129 ecological reserves across the province, to determine what they want. Customer-service training for staff ensures that the service meets the needs of users.

- **British Columbia Pavilion Corporation** gives all staff, including the Chief Executive Officer and Vice Presidents, a four-hour orientation session which focuses on the corporate philosophy about how business is done by the Corporation. The sessions enforce the mission statement: "The Best Event Experience in North America." Staff are also given customer-service training which is based on the DisneyWorld program. They are empowered to make decisions which meet customers' expectations right on the front line. Their "Yes We Can!" slogan is also part of the training program and sends a strong signal to customers that the staff are there to help.

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Attorney General** has redesigned the Small Claims Court process in response to concerns about bureaucratic language expressed by members of the public. All rules and forms have been re-written in plain language. The Ministry's "Self-Help" booklets which are also written in plain language, are available free of charge to the customers. Two hundred and thirty-seven staff throughout the province have been trained to provide assistance to the public.

- **British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority** focuses on service to the customer. The Corporation has decentralized the decision-making process within the organization and created empowered work teams which have the authority to make service-related decisions in the field in order to ensure effective delivery of service to the customer.

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Transportation and Highways** embraced the overall concept of excellence in service and launched pilot projects in six districts to help find new ways to improve service to customers.

"We hold the vision that motivated, highly-skilled employees will enable the Ministry to improve its customers' total service experience by having many successful customer contact times."

- British Columbia, Ministry of Transportation and Highways Service Excellence Guide Book

- **British Columbia, Government Agents Branch** is known province-wide for its customer-service focus. The Branch has placed a strong emphasis on service and skills training for all staff and uses computer technology to extend information and other services to areas outside the Lower Mainland and Victoria areas. For example, its sixty offices across the province can now issue Vital Statistics certificates to customers as quickly and efficiently as the offices of the Lower Mainland and Victoria areas are able to do. Computer technology is also used to do routine jobs and leave staff free to concentrate on doing tasks which require direct contact with customers.

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Government Management Services and Minister Responsible for Women's Programs** has introduced Service Quality training throughout the ministry. The Achieve Group's training model is used to teach the concepts of service to customers, whether training is offered to executives at their retreats or as service-skills training sessions to staff in the ministry.

Ten steps to excellence in Service Quality

Successful public sector organizations throughout Europe, North America, Japan and elsewhere have committed themselves to Service Quality. In focusing on the people they serve, they have taken different approaches to meeting customers' needs. Although each initiative has its unique features, the following ten steps are essential to delivering excellence in quality and service and are reflected in all the efforts:

1. **Identify your customers.**
2. **Identify your products and services and your partners in providing Service Quality.**
3. **Build the "Quality and Service Excellence" goal into your agency's mission statement and continually communicate it to all staff.**
4. **Survey your customers' Service Quality expectations and their satisfaction on a regular basis. Regularly ask customers and front line staff to identify needed Service Quality improvements.**
5. **Set customer-driven service standards and constantly measure your performance.**
6. **Review delivery systems, including policies, procedures and forms for "customer friendliness."**
7. **Train staff in techniques and skills for improving quality and customer service.**
8. **Empower the staff who serve customers.**
9. **Recognize and celebrate team and individual success in providing outstanding quality and service.**
10. **Develop and implement a Service Quality Improvement Plan, embodying the previous steps.**

Work to build a strong customer-focused culture in the agency.

Developed by D. Brian Marson

Step 1

Identify your customers.

"Once you decide what business you are in, you must determine exactly who your customers are. This sounds easy, but for those sitting at the top of the pyramid - and not working on the front lines in day-to-day contact with customers - it can be tricky."

- Jan Carlzon
President and CEO
Scandinavian Airlines

"One of today's great challenges for a public sector organization is maintaining a strong client orientation in the face of restraint, staff turnover, outmoded values and an increasingly competitive and customer-oriented private sector."

- Victor Rocine
Principal
Coopers & Lybrand
Consulting Group

Know who your customers are and know what services and functions you should provide for them. Service providers who form their own ideas about what customers want can be out of touch. Who the customers are must be very clear to management as well as everyone else in the organization.

Identifying the customer in a government organization may not be easy. Public servants who work on the front line tend to think of the general public as the customer and may not focus on who the specific customers are. Those who work in other areas such as central agencies, administrative support services, financial services or regulatory agencies may focus on policies which complicate the work of those who deliver services to other customers.

"If you are not serving a customer, you should be serving someone who is."

- Karl Albrecht
and Ron Zemke
Authors

When an organization adopts the Service Quality culture, it grapples with this problem, re-evaluates its direction, and gets closer to both internal and external customers. In government organizations the struggle may involve looking at legislated mandates, traditional internal policies, government rules and other barriers which stand in the way of getting close to the customer and then finding ways to eliminate them.

The British Columbia Purchasing Commission's decision to change its emphasis from low-cost bidding to meeting the service needs of customers who actually use the equipment purchased, is an interesting example of how one central agency shifted to the Service Quality style of management. The corporation is now a leader in demonstrating how a government organization can meet customers' needs by re-defining its role and getting closer to the customer.

Step 2

Identify your products and services and your partners in providing Service Quality.

"Everyone in government has many partners who are essential in helping us provide good quality service. We couldn't do it without them!"

- Faye Schmidt
Director, Service Quality
British Columbia, Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations

The three forms which government organizations take (service delivery, legislation and policy development, and regulation and enforcement), often overlap. Organizations such as the **British Columbia Ministry of Parks** and the **British Columbia Ministry of Environment,** for example, perform regulatory as well as service functions. This may make it difficult for some staff to know what to focus on. People who visit parks to enjoy themselves and experience the outdoors are also governed by rules and guidelines which protect the environment for future users. The providers of a service may also work with other agencies to carry out a special mandate. They can all achieve good outcomes by forming partnerships and maintaining open, consultative relations with each other to ensure that experiences are as positive as possible, despite the need to regulate activity.

Step 3

Build the "Quality and Service Excellence" goal into your agency's mission statement and continually communicate it to all staff.

> *"A commitment to service excellence must be unequivocal. It radiates from senior managers, who must eat, breathe and sleep customer service as the nucleus of their corporate culture."*
>
> *- Karl Albrecht*
> *Author*

Service excellence must be a central element in the organization's culture and must focus on people - **internally** as well as **externally**. The commitment to continual service improvement must visibly radiate from the most senior levels of the organization. Service Quality and the commitment to excellence must be built into the mission of the organization and accepted and supported by all staff.

Examples of service excellence mission statements which have been developed in public sector organizations include:

- **Saskatchewan, Ministry of Health:**
  "Serving People First."
- **Washington State, Department of Licensing:**
  "High-quality customer service in an innovative, common-sense environment."
- **British Columbia Pavilion Corporation:**
  "The Best Event Experience in North America."
- **Washington State, Department of Labor and Industries:**
  "We strive for excellent service to customers, workers and employers."
- **California, City of Long Beach:**
  "The City's business is Service. We are committed to providing quality service in ways that are helpful, caring and responsive."
- **South Carolina, Municipality of Rock Hill:**
  "Service is our bread and butter."
- **British Columbia, Office of the Comptroller General:**
  "Excellence in service and financial control."
- **British Columbia, Government Agents Branch:**
  "Superior Service, Empowered Staff, Cost-Effective Program Delivery."
- **Georgia State, General Services Administration:**
  "Each service experience with us will be positive and satisfying for all our customers."

> *"It's a funny thing about life; if you refuse to accept anything but the very best, you very often get it."*
>
> *- William Somerset Maughm*
> *Author*

Step 4

Survey your customers' Service Quality expectations and their satisfaction on a regular basis. Regularly ask customers and front line staff to identify needed Service Quality improvements.

> *"Customers perceive service in their own unique, idiosyncratic, emotional, erratic, irrational, end-of-the-day and totally human terms. Perception is all there is!"*
>
> *- Tom Peters*
> *Author and Management Consultant*

Rather than focusing on customer preferences, management tends to evaluate the quality of services from an internal perspective. If we want to meet customer expectations, the first step is to get outside the organization and ask people what they think of our services and what they want from us. Finding out what is in their minds and where they are going will strengthen the organization's ability to perform well.

Customer feedback must be sought frequently and must be focused on the perceptions of the customer. Perceptions are often intangible and to really get to the heart of what the customer is saying will require effective listening skills. This will mean being ready to hear and respond to unhappy and dissatisfied customers as well as friendly and happy ones.

> *"Listening, really listening, is tough and grinding work, often humbling, sometimes distasteful. It's a fairly sure bet that you won't like the lion's share of what you hear."*
>
> *- Bob Waterman*
> *Author and Management Consultant*

- **British Columbia Pavilion Corporation** points out that using extrasensory perception is not a good way to find out what customers want. The corporation used to assume that at coffee breaks the customers wanted beautifully appointed tables with flowers, fine china and nice pastries. When the banqueting department at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre asked their customers what they wanted most at a coffee break, the answer was:

  - two cups of coffee in fifteen minutes,

  - easy access to telephones,

  - washrooms close by.

- **Toronto Transit Commission (TTC)** regularly surveys riders on their attitudes towards transit service. In a recent survey, riders were asked how they expected to be treated by bus drivers and drivers were asked what they thought passengers expected from them. The drivers said they believed riders regarded route and fare information as essential. The riders, on the other hand, added another set of expectations:

  - help for passengers who need assistance,

  - effective crowd management,

  - neat, well-groomed and courteous drivers.

- **A United States Midwestern Art Museum** wanted to attract more visitors to the museum. The directors surveyed the people who came into the museum to find out more about their needs. One of the key questions asked on the survey card was, "Why did you come into the museum today?" The most frequent reply was "Because it was raining outside." The second most popular answer was, "To use the washroom."

Improvement in service quality is results-driven and requires investigative approaches to finding solutions to problems. **British Columbia Telephone Company**, for example, holds regular "defective tool days" to help improve Service Quality. Teams of telephone installers and repair staff bring in the cables, switches, testing equipment and procedures that are causing problems. The suppliers listen to the teams and the group leader records the dates by which the suppliers will have the problems fixed or will present a progress report.

These analytical sessions and the attention to detail emphasize B.C. Tel's commitment to the importance of producing high quality products to complement good service to customers.

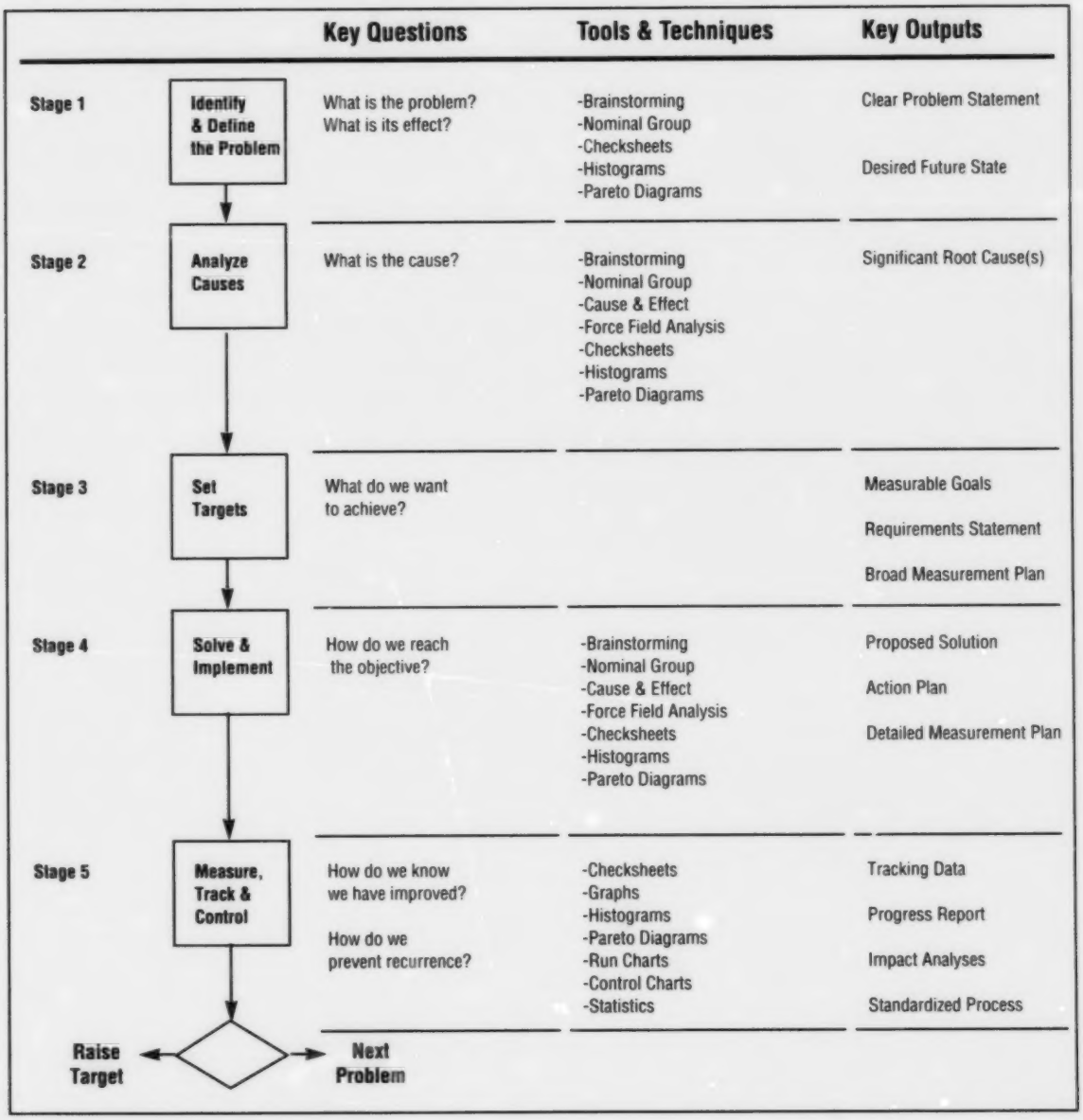
> *"Once the organization can see itself through the eyes of the customer, it can understand the need to ensure that each part of the business process is a vital link in the chain. Each link must relentlessly focus on producing a quality product that will be an input for the next stage in the process."*
>
> *- The Conference Board of Canada*

Improving quality by improving processes

Every service produced is the result of a process and every organization is a conglomerate of many separate but related processes.

Most organizations can break down their entire business into a few major processes. When people are trained to focus on the entire organization and the end product, they can develop simple, problem-solving tools to help improve the service and the quality.

The example below has been adapted from the Quality Improvement Process used by IBM Canada Ltd.



Ways to listen to the customer

There are many ways to listen regularly and systematically to the customer. Which tools you use will depend on the culture of your organization, the nature of the customers and the type of information you are looking for. Measuring the customer's perception of service can be difficult. A mixture of as many methods as possible is the best approach.

Some successful ways include:

- **Focus groups for existing services.** These groups bring customers and staff together to discuss specific issues. They can provide invaluable feedback and guidance on expectations, trends, standards and complaints about the services provided. For example, through the use of focus groups, the **British Columbia Office of the Comptroller General** discovered that suppliers wanted more information printed on government cheque stubs in order to match payments to their invoices more efficiently.
- **Customer satisfaction surveys.** This is a powerful tool for measuring user satisfaction. Surveys may be complex and detailed, or as simple as the kind of check-off questions used by hotels, restaurants and municipalities. Examples include, the **City of Burlington**, the **British Columbia Ministry of Parks** and the **British Columbia Liquor Distribution Branch.** To be successful, however, they must be broad and open-ended and ask questions we may not feel comfortable dealing with. The information can be used to handle customer complaints more objectively and can also suggest ways to respond which will prevent problems in the future.

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF BURLINGTON

HOW DID WE DO TODAY?

We would like to know ...

COURTESY _____

_____

PROMPTNESS _____

_____

STAFF KNOWLEDGE _____

_____

OTHER COMMENTS _____

_____

DEPARTMENT/LOCATION _____

NATURE OR PURPOSE OF CONTACT _____

DATE _____

_____

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A PERSONAL REPLY,
PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

TELEPHONE _____

Comments may be mailed or deposited in the collection box at the information desk on the Main Floor of City Hall.
Thank you for helping us serve you better.

- **1-800 toll-free telephone numbers for comments, questions or complaints.** The customer "Hot Line" is one of the most frequently used and most effective methods of staying in touch with customers. When managers themselves take turns receiving telephone calls and listening on a regular basis, they have an excellent way of picking up on trends and learning how services are perceived by customers.
- **Comment cards which are available on site for customers to fill out.** This is an inexpensive and effective way to listen to customers. The **London Ontario Public Library** circulates book markers requesting customers' comments, to be handed in when they return books.
- **Customer information and education.** This is an excellent way for government organizations to find out what the customers want and to pass on information to customers. Activities may involve conferences, seminars, user group meetings, and other educational events.
- **Listening to front-line staff.** They know the customer best! Staff who are trained in service skills learn to listen closely to the customer and to provide management with feedback that is precise and accurate. They should be encouraged to participate in organization-wide programs on customer relations, to build good working relationships with partners across government, and to develop good customer relations.
- **Opportunities for customer-related situations.** Managers, supervisors and support staff experience customer-related situations through visits and face-to-face meetings with customers to see how the services are being used or passed on. This provides a better understanding of customers' expectations. For example, they should spend time talking to customers who are waiting in line, or visiting customers at their own site.

Provincial Parks
Visitor Comment Card

BC Parks

Dear Park Visitor,

We'd like to know what you think of your provincial parks system.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the attached card and give us your opinion of the services and facilities that we provide in this park.

Your comments will be carefully reviewed by park staff so they may learn how to better serve you.

BC PARKS

Open doors to adventure

YOUR COMMENTS PLEASE

Q1. First, have you ever stayed overnight in this Campground before? (Please circle the number of your answer)

1. NO (Go to Q2.) 2. YES

a) (If yes), in what year did you last stay overnight in this Campground _____ YEAR

b) (If yes), would you say that this Campground is now managed: (Please circle the number of your answer)

1. BETTER 2. SAME 3. WORSE: than on your last visit?

Q2. Next, how do you feel about the FACILITIES and SERVICES in this Campground? For each of the following, please indicate whether you feel each is EXCELLENT, ABOVE AVERAGE, AVERAGE, BELOW AVERAGE or POOR. (Please circle the letter of your answer)

FACILITIES AND SERVICES	EXCELLENT	ABOVE AVERAGE	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	POOR	NOT APPLICABLE
1. Cleanliness of Restrooms	A	B	C	D	E	NA
2. Cleanliness of Your Campsite	A	B	C	D	E	NA
3. Condition of Campground Facilities	A	B	C	D	E	NA
4. Upkeep of Park Roads	A	B	C	D	E	NA
5. Availability of Firewood	A	B	C	D	E	NA
6. Availability of Park Information in the Park	A	B	C	D	E	NA
7. Your Sense of Security in the Campground	A	B	C	D	E	NA
8. Adequacy of Park Signs in the Park	A	B	C	D	E	NA
9. Helpfulness of Staff	A	B	C	D	E	NA
10. Number of Recreational Things to Do in the Park	A	B	C	D	E	NA
11. Control of Noise	A	B	C	D	E	NA
12. Control of Pets	A	B	C	D	E	NA
13. Value for the Fee	A	B	C	D	E	NA
14. If you were to recommend this Campground to a friend, your recommendation would be	A	B	C	D	E	NA

Q3. Which of the above FACILITIES and SERVICES are most important to you while you are staying in this Campground? (Please put the number of the items in the appropriate box below)

- ☐ MOST IMPORTANT
- ☐ SECOND MOST IMPORTANT
- ☐ THIRD MOST IMPORTANT

Q4. About how many nights do you plan to stay in this Campground on this trip? _____ NIGHTS

Q5. What type(s) of camping accommodation are you using during your stay in this Campground? (Please circle the number of all that apply)

1. TENT
2. TENT TRAILER
3. TRUCK CAMPER
4. VAN
5. TRAVEL TRAILER/5th WHEELER
6. MOTOR HOME
7. OTHER (Please specify) _____

Q6. During your stay in this Campground, which of the following activities did (will) you do in this park? (Please circle the numbers of only those activities that you either did or plan to do in this park)

1. USE THE PICNIC AREA
2. VISIT THE BEACH
3. GO SWIMMING
4. GO FISHING
5. GO BOATING
6. GO BICYCLING
7. LONG HIKE (over 2 hours)
8. SHORT HIKE (under 2 hours)
9. GO TO VISITOR CENTRE
10. ATTEND VISITOR PROGRAM
11. NONE OF THE ABOVE
12. OTHER (Please specify) _____

Q7. During your stay in this Campground, which of the following activities did (will) you do outside this park? (Please circle the numbers of only those activities you went, or will go, outside of the park to do)

1. DID NOT/WILL NOT GO OUTSIDE THIS PARK TODAY
2. PICNIC
3. VISIT A LOCAL BEACH
4. GO SWIMMING
5. GO FISHING
6. GO BOATING
7. GO BICYCLING
8. LONG HIKE (over 2 hours)
9. SHORT HIKE (under 2 hours)
10. USE NEARBY COMMUNITY RECREATION FACILITIES
11. VISIT LOCAL TOURIST ATTRACTIONS
12. HAVE A RESTAURANT MEAL
13. GO SHOPPING FOR PLEASURE
14. BUY CAMPING SUPPLIES
15. TOUR AREA IN AUTOMOBILE
16. OTHER (Please specify) _____

Q8. All in all, did your stay in this park live up to your original expectations? (Please circle the number of your answer)

1. DEFINITELY YES
2. PROBABLY YES
3. UNSURE
4. PROBABLY NO
5. DEFINITELY NO

Please tell us why it has or has not met your expectations.

_____

_____

Q9. How many nights, altogether, do you plan to be away from your home on this trip ?_____ NIGHTS

Q10. About how many nights, in total, do you plan to camp in 1989? _____ NIGHTS

Q11. Since this survey concerns your feelings about provincial parks, it is important for us to know who visits our campgrounds. In the spaces provided below, please list all the people in your party starting with YOURSELF.

	WHO? (e.g. wife, husband, son, etc)	AGE (in years)	SEX (F-Female) (M-Male)
1.	YOURSELF	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____

Q12. What is your permanent address? _____

_____
Nearest City, Town or Village

_____ _____
Province, State or Country Postal or Zip Code

Q13. Is there anything else that you would like to tell us? Any comments you wish to make, about this or any provincial park, will be greatly appreciated (either here or in a separate letter or note).

_____

_____

_____

TODAY'S DATE _____

PLEASE DROP THIS CARD (AND YOUR NOTE OR LETTER), IN THE BOX LOCATED NEAR THE PARK EXIT.

"THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP"

02009

HOLIDAY CHECKLIST ✓

Personal Needs
- o spare eyeglasses
- o prescription drugs
- o prescriptions
- o sunglasses o sun hat
- o books to read
- o favourite games to play

First Aid Needs
- o book o band-aids
- o bandages o gauze pads
- o adhesive tape o sting stop
- o scissors o penlight
- o needle o eye wash
- o safety pins o tweezers
- o triangular bandages
- o petroleum jelly
- o tensor bandages
- o bottle of antiseptic
- o thermometer

Travel Needs
- o travel diary
- o B.C. Road Map & Parks Guide
- o B.C. Accommodation Guide

B.C. PARKS BROCHURES:
- o Marine
- o Lower Mainland
- o Vancouver Island
- o Kootenays
- o Cariboo/Shuswap/Okanagan
- o Northern B.C.

Fishing Licenses & Guides:
- o freshwater license
- o freshwater regulations
- o tidal water license
- o tidal water guide

Camping Needs
- o tent o sleeping bags
- o mattresses o ground sheets
- o stove o cooler o pail
- o water jug o basin
- o camp chairs o lantern
- o spare mantel o fuel
- o flashlight o batteries
- o bulbs o rainwear
- o fire extinguisher
- o matches o kitchen tools
- o axe/hatchet o shovel
- o splitting maul/wedge
- o hunting knife
- o folding knife
- o rope o twine
- o duct tape o sewing kit
- o clothespins o tarpaulin
- o fishing rods o broom
- o tool kit o clothes hangers
- o eating implements

Boating Needs
- o lifejackets o oars/paddles
- o tide tables o bailer
- o air horn/whistle
- o pocket compass
- o boat hook o tools
- o plug(s) o propeller
- o shear pin o starter cord
- o fuel can o oil
- o float plan cards
- o anchor and line

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS:
Forest fires — dial 0 and ask for Zenith 5555
Marine and aircraft — dial 1-800-742-1313

Step 5

Set customer-driven service standards and constantly measure your performance.

"What gets measured gets managed."

- Anonymous

"To better serve the public, we have closely monitored our customer service level goals and taken a number of steps to maintain customer services at targeted levels. Some examples of this include:

- 15-minute average waiting time for field office customers,

- 21-calendar-day average processing time for issuing titles for vehicles."

- Oregon State
Department of Motor Vehicles

Setting customer-driven standards and measuring how well the organization is doing are essential activities to providing customer-driven service. This is a continuous process. It means asking customers what service standards are reasonable so that the organization can review its present performance, introduce new solutions and test the effectiveness of the solutions with the customers. The solutions can then be incorporated into every-day routines. In this way, productivity is enhanced and services are provided at a level which satisfies the customers' needs.

Providing customer-driven service standards means establishing:

- maximum turn-around times for replying to correspondence,
- maximum number of rings before a telephone is answered,
- maximum waiting times spent in line-ups,
- extended hours of service,
- convenient office locations,
- convenient parking places,
- consistent reliability of service or product.

Market research indicates that customers regard the following factors as critical to good customer service:

- responsiveness,
- competence,
- easy access,
- courtesy,
- good communication,
- security,
- appearance of staff,
- understanding the customers' needs for attractive physical facilities.

By paying attention to these factors, the Service Quality organization will be the kind of organization that customers want to do business with.

> *"Develop and use hard-nosed, qualitative, systematic, customer satisfaction measures (focusing on relative, perceived product quality and responsiveness); tie the measures directly to performance evaluation and compensation, preferably for all functions at all levels in the organization."*
>
> *- Tom Peters*
> *Author and Management Consultant*

Step 6

Review delivery systems, including policies, procedures and forms for "customer friendliness."

Public sector programs often have legal and traditional requirements for service delivery which affect the timeliness, quality and adequacy of the services provided to customers. Complex systems may also reduce accessibility to the service and even impair the positive attitude of the staff. Service Quality organizations have friendly, knowledgeable staff and simplified rules and procedures. They try to find new ways to deliver better services through such initiatives as:

- Innovative use of information technology,
- Cutting red tape,
- Using plain language,
- Changing work flow,
- Rooting out unnecessary rules.

..WOULD YOU MIND HELPING ME OUT OF THIS?

Through the customers' eyes:

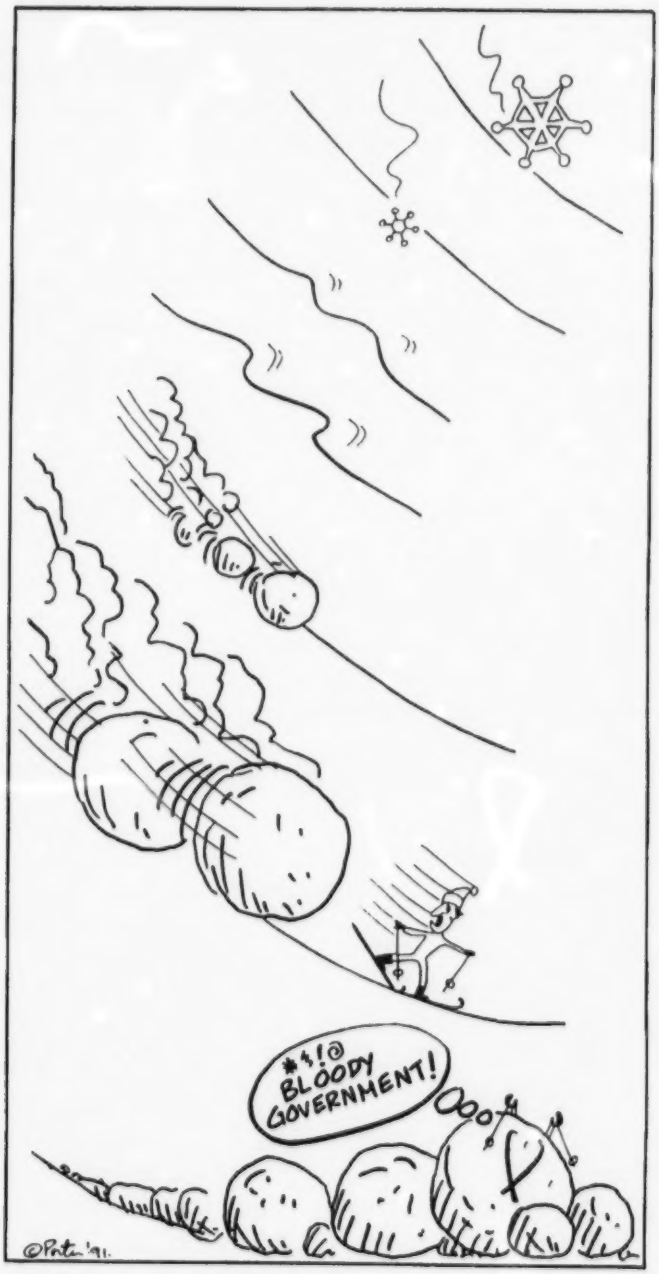
Some questions to ask about service delivery systems

- Is the service office close to a bus line?
- Is parking adequate?
- Is there wheelchair access?
- Is telephone access easy?
- Is the office listing easy to find in the blue pages?
- Do customers experience "the run-around?"
- Are instructions to customers written in plain language?
- Do customers experience unnecessary red tape?
- Are policies and procedures flexible and "customer-friendly?"
- Can technology be used to improve service?

"Government must also become user-friendly. All too often, the public dreads the thought of making contact with government. Images of dreary buildings, endless lines, hassled officials and strictly enforced office hours even haunt public servants themselves."

"If government is to be for the people, it must go where the people are. Government must go to the shopping malls and branch libraries. Instead of making the people fit government schedules and government locales, government must fit the people's schedules and needs. Government must abandon the old notion of a Monday-to-Friday government and 9-to-5 business hours. That is part of improving the conditions of government work for all ... government employees as well as the public they serve."

- Paul A. Volcker
Leadership For America:
Rebuilding The Public Service



Many government organizations have introduced new initiatives to improve their service delivery systems. They focus on the people who deliver the services and encourage them to use their ingenuity and imagination in actively seeking ways to make their services more "customer-friendly."

For example:

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Transportation and Highways - "Search and Destroy" Initiative:**
  This two-day seminar for staff from across the Ministry, including line staff, area managers and engineers, focuses on leadership and empowerment of staff who are encouraged to create simpler service delivery systems.

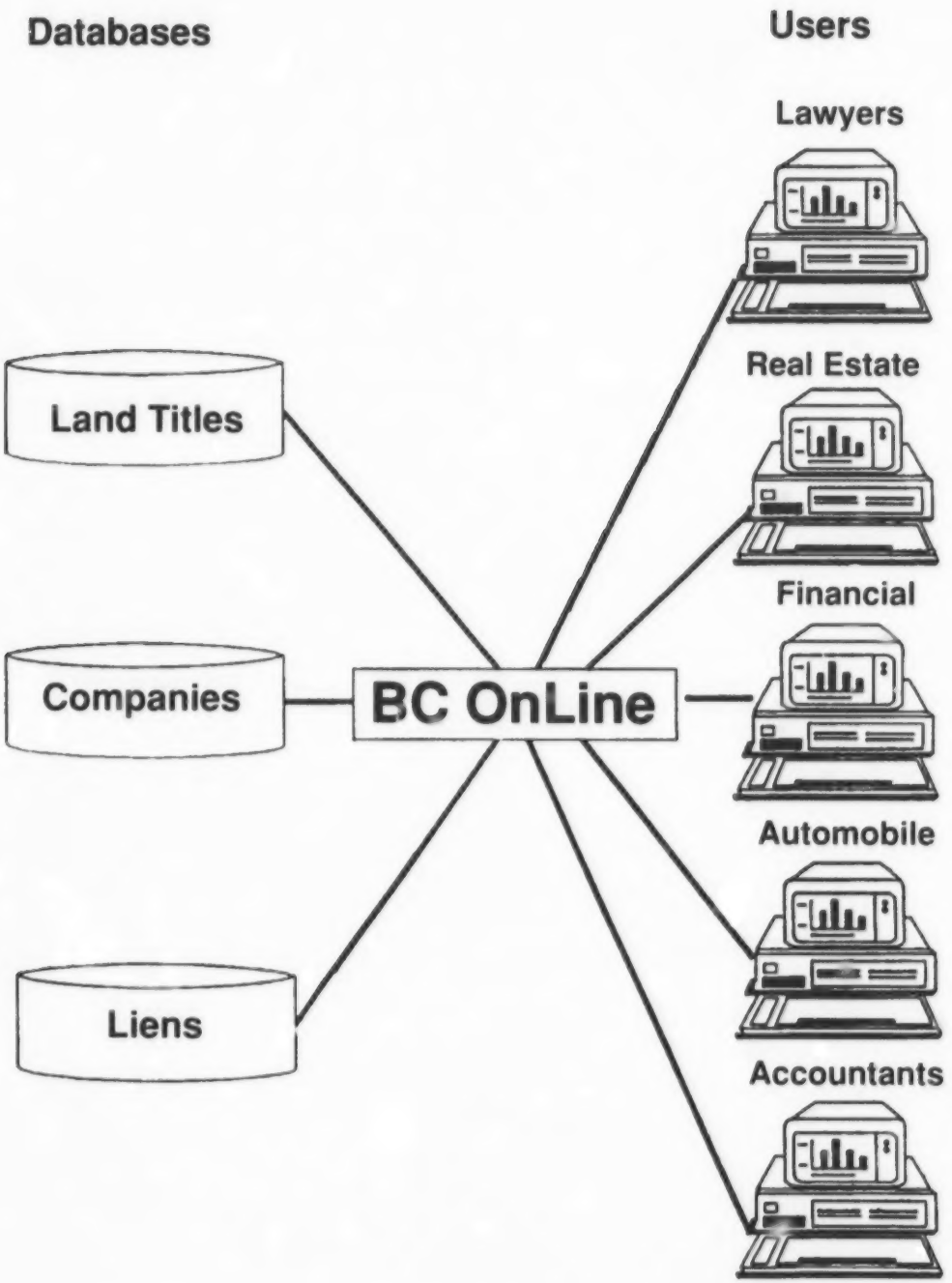
  "Teams are encouraged to identify barriers and make suggestions for cutting red tape and smashing through barriers in order to throw out the garbage which impedes service delivery."

  - Ray Mau
  Service Quality Coordinator
  Ministry of Transportation
  & Highways

- **City of Montreal, "Access Montreal" Project:**
  This award-winning project brought municipal government closer to the citizens by establishing 14 "Access Montreal" Centres which are distributed throughout the city. They provide a direct link between citizens and the municipal administration. This is a store-front, neighbourhood-based network of public information offices which puts a human face on government, with each centre attempting to meet the needs of the unique personality of each individual neighbourhood. The centres are also accessible to the disabled, and their modern, attractive decor enhances the quality of service for their customers.

- **Oregon State, Department of Motor Vehicles:**
  In its efforts to better serve the public, the department has extended the hours of customer service in its field offices to include evenings and Saturdays and has established three new "express" offices conveniently located in shopping malls. They have also started to use receptionists in the busiest offices to greet customers when they enter the office. The receptionists make certain that the customers have all the information and details they need to complete their business with the department.

- **British Columbia "Online:"**
  This cross-ministry innovation allows the business community, including lawyers, real estate firms, financial institutions and automobile dealers to access the province's regulatory databases from their place of business and avoid time-consuming trips to government offices for services. Using a modem-equipped PC, they dial directly into the databases for Land Titles, Companies and Personal Property Registry from anywhere in the province. The service offers convenience, time savings, single point contact, extended hours of service and lower overall costs.


Databases
Users
Lawyers
Real Estate
Financial
Automobile
Accountants
Land Titles
Companies
Liens
BC OnLine

- **British Columbia, Office of the Comptroller General - "The Dumbest Job I Do" Contest:**
  All OCG staff, including seconded staff and staff from Crown corporations, are asked to help support the ministry's Service Quality initiative by identifying as many useless, bureaucratic, annoying, nuisance-type jobs, as possible. The aim is to create a more streamlined approach to service, while improving the work environment. To encourage staff participation, individual prizes are offered as well as one final grand prize. Entries are also added to the Suggestion Awards Program. This idea has caught the imagination of other ministries, and more groups are starting their own initiatives. In the **British Columbia Ministry of Government Management Services and Minister Responsible for Women's Programs**, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Support Services has written to all 720 members of staff asking them to identify the silly rules they must work with.

Step 7

Train staff in techniques and skills for improving quality and customer service.

"Businesses in general spend too little time training and motivating their front-line employees, whom they treat as the lowest workers on the ladder."

- "Pul-eeze! Will Somebody Help Me?"
Time Magazine

When an organization becomes customer-focused, it emphasizes training for all staff, including the management team, as an important part of its strategic plan. In this way everyone in the organization is knowledgeable and committed to meeting the established goals. Training is a critical element for Service Quality improvement. It must be thorough and responsive to customer needs in order to be effective. Without the correct mix of skills, strategies and systems to support the Service Quality initiative, the best intentions will quickly die.

"In the new information society, education and training are no mere amenities; they are the prime tools for growing people and profits."

- Patricia Aburdeen
and John Naisbitt
Authors

Key training for staff and examples of how this can be obtained are:

- **Job content** (including the range of services provided):

  British Columbia, Government Agents Branch uses competency-based training modules which can be easily sent out to all its branches to keep staff up to date on the wide range of cross-ministry programs offered throughout the province.

- **Customer service skills:**

  British Columbia Systems Corporation, British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority and the **British Columbia Office of the Comptroller General** offer staff a two-day **KASET International** service skills training course which helps them to deal more effectively with both internal and external customers.

  British Columbia Pavilion Corporation has adapted the DisneyWorld training model in its Vancouver offices and has sent staff to the Walt Disney University in Florida to take courses in Service Excellence and People Management.

  British Columbia Telephone Company trains its staff in telephone answering skills to ensure that callers consistently experience the quality standards established by the corporation. These training sessions are also made available to other organizations.

- **Analyzing and solving quality and service problems:**

  Hewlett-Packard trains its Total Quality Control (TQC) teams to use simple analytical tools to solve production problems right on the shop floor, instead of sending them up the line to supervisors for solutions. Their motto is "Your Customers Expect Perfection."

Step 8

Empower the staff who serve customers.

"A well-thought-out management system permits the delegation of responsibility, giving others the freedom to operate their own show without interference by nit-picking staff or meddling bosses. It stimulates creativity and individual initiative. Organizations must be participative and flexible, yet at the same time, structured and disciplined."

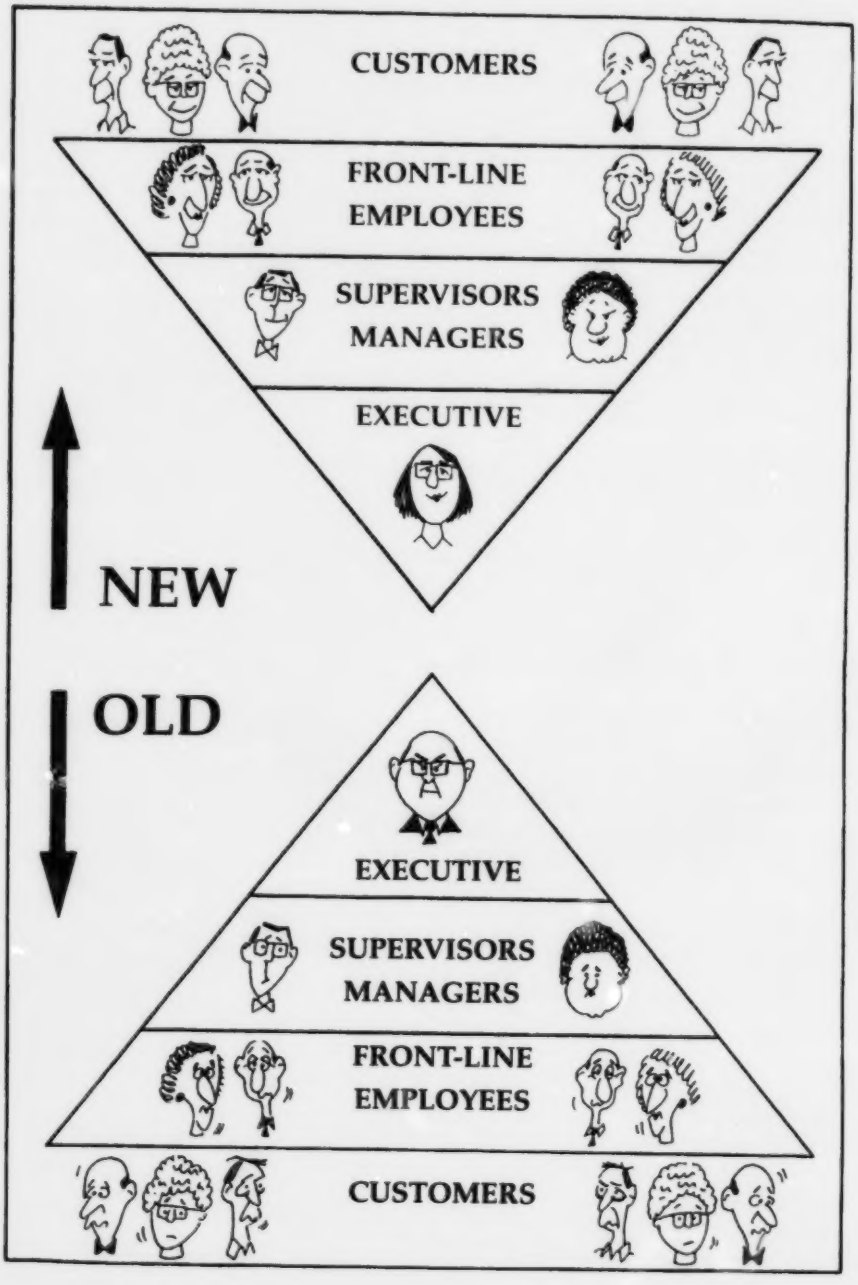
- Charles W. Joiner, Jr.
Author

Trust is a key value in good service delivery. Customer-focused organizations create strong, trusting environments where staff are encouraged to take risks in finding innovative solutions to problems. This requires them to make decisions and to learn and practice the "art of recovery," so that when things go wrong they are able to correct the problem through the use of their own best judgement.

Empowering staff means delegating authority and responsibilities throughout the organization and restructuring human resource management practices, beginning with hiring policies and reinforcing the organization's values. Training, staff development, recognition, reward, evaluation, promotion and a focus on effective communication, are all inter-related and relevant to the empowerment of staff. A new management style will eventually develop in which the traditional bureaucratic structure, which focuses on management from the top down, will change so that the pyramid is reversed, and the customer is placed at the top of the organization.

"Supervisors and managers are going to have to be more willing to share power, and ask employees what needs to be done."

- Connie Newman
Director, United States
Office of Personnel Management


CUSTOMERS
FRONT-LINE
EMPLOYEES
SUPERVISORS
MANAGERS
EXECUTIVE
NEW
OLD
EXECUTIVE
SUPERVISORS
MANAGERS
FRONT-LINE
EMPLOYEES
CUSTOMERS

Some examples of staff empowerment in practice are:

- **British Columbia Pavilion Corporation** trains staff to understand that customer service is a "strategic weapon." They are told:

  - Admit when you are wrong and correct the problem now,
  - If a customer complains that the hot dog is cold, give him another one immediately,
  - If he gets ketchup on his shirt, and it's our fault, clean his shirt; or buy him a new one.

- **British Columbia, Ministry of Crown Lands** encourages staff to "Do what is right, guided, rather than restricted by what is written." They are trained in customer service skills and coached to try to see things from the customers' point of view. Field and office staff are given the broad goals for the organization and the detailed policies for each land use program. As long as they work within the broad framework, they may deviate from a stated policy when the bureaucratic requirements make it difficult to meet an individual customer's need. The field officers and adjudication staff can make individual decisions with the knowledge that individual judgement is supported and valued by the management team.

Step 9

Recognize and celebrate team and individual success in providing outstanding quality and service.

"Somehow people who work in the public sector are supposed to be motivated differently than are those in the private sector. They aren't supposed to need "thank-yous" and pats on the back."

- Sandra Hale
Minnesota State Government

Recognition and reward for good performance is an integral part of the Service Quality culture. People appreciate and respond positively to recognition. It may be as sophisticated as training opportunities, rewards and promotions linked to high quality service, or as simple as a pat on the back. Celebrating the stars of the organization often includes presentations to line staff by senior managers, including deputy ministers, work-site visits from senior managers, letters, placards, citations and special events.

Recognition events which combine strong impact with low-budget implications include:

- thank-you cards and letters,
- plaques,
- staff celebrations,
- luncheons,
- special assignments,
- career development opportunities,
- newsletter features.

The most effective award systems involve all staff, and recipients are chosen by staff participation. For example, staff can be asked to define awards and help select the winners. One successful example of staff involvement is found in the **United States National Forest Services, Ochoco National Park's "Groo Award,"** named after the originator and managed entirely by the staff. Each person has one "Groo Award" to give to another staff member for outstanding service during the year. Winners of the award value it highly since it comes from "their own" rather than from management.

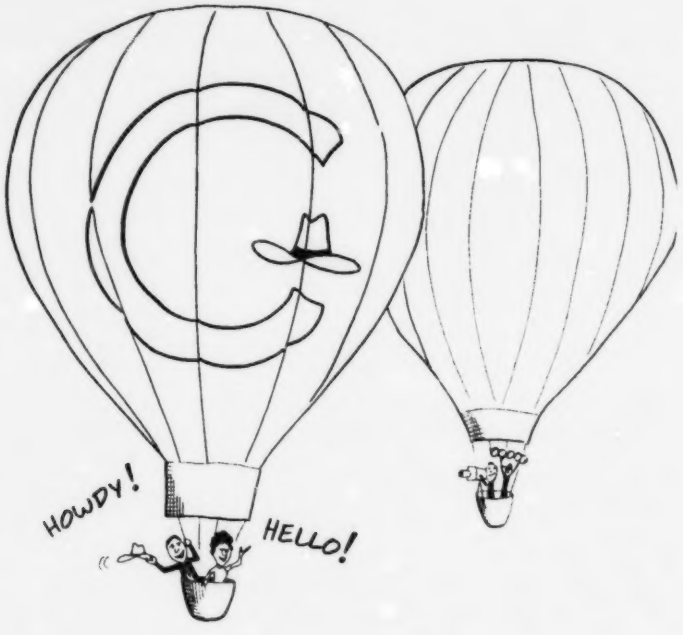
"I have yet to find the person, however exalted their station, who did not do better work and put forth greater effort under a spirit of approval, than under a spirit of criticism."

- Charles Schwab
Entrepreneur

Many government organizations have built recognition and celebration for achievement and work well done into their Service Quality culture. Some popular examples are:

British Columbia, Office of the Comptroller General has included an Awards and Recognition segment in its new "The Dumbest Job I Do" contest. Every entry earns a "The Dumbest Job I Do" mug for its author, to demonstrate recognition for their creativity in finding ways to improve customer service.

City of Calgary's Service Improvement Program rewards staff who exemplify the attributes of Service Quality by providing a variety of special events, including a hot air balloon ride with the Mayor of the City.



Washington State, Department of Labor and Industries holds an annual celebration in the Performing Arts Centre to honour staff for outstanding service achievements during the past year. The service teams and service "All-Stars" are recognized by the state governor and other senior managers for their contributions to Service Quality.

British Columbia, Ministry of Attorney General, Court Services Branch, is developing a rewards and recognition program which asks staff for ideas about what will work. It involves a contest which is open to staff, both individual and groups, within the branch. The prize is a special dinner for those who contribute to the success of the program.

British Columbia Pavilion Corporation developed service-focused team and individual awards which are based on staff participation. Individuals and groups receive prizes which range from television sets to trips, Nintendo games, and mountain bikes. Prizes are won by saving or pooling "wish chips" given to staff members as rewards and thank you gifts by managers and visitors. The innovative "Dinner on the Dome" prize is provided for six people - the winning staff member and five guests. They are taken up to the roof of the stadium for a gourmet dinner. Souvenir photographs are taken of the group with the city of Vancouver in the background.

United States Public Service Recognition Week involves federal, state and local public servants who are honoured annually for their vital contributions to American society. The main objective of the celebration is to inform Americans of the high calibre of people working in government and the value of the services they provide.

> *"Feedback could be called the breakfast of champions, but it will do no good unless it is given while the sweat is still on the workers' brows ...the good boss knows... that money alone often ceases to be such an effective motivator. I have seen companies in which a three dollar plastic achievement plaque is given prime wall space, even by a high earner, and will motivate greater commitment to the corporate mission than a stack of ten-dollar bills."*
>
> *- Peter G. Hanson.*
> *Author*

Step 10

Develop and implement a Service Quality Improvement Plan, embodying the previous steps.

No two Service Quality initiatives are the same. The uniqueness of each organization will require a Service Improvement Plan which is tailored to its customers, services and culture. Nevertheless, three components are critical to the success of each plan:

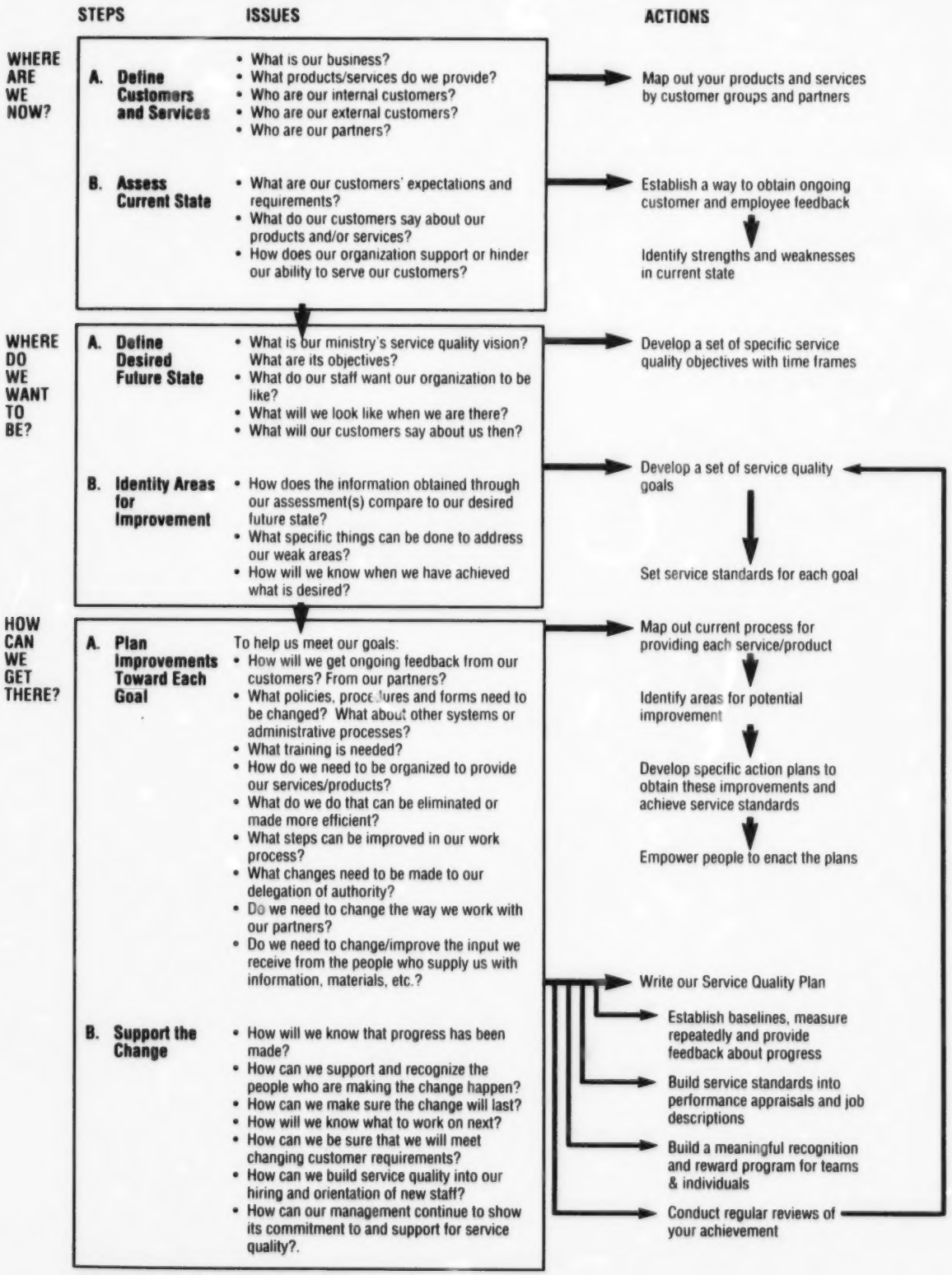
- **Ensure top management's demonstrated commitment to the vision of excellence and leadership.**
  Top management must be seen by all staff to be committed to Service Quality. Their commitment will be judged by what they do, not what they say.
- **Ensure that the organization knows what customers need and then develop customer-focused services and delivery systems to meet that need.**
  Organizations which focus inwardly develop inaccurate views of what the customer wants and how to deliver it.
- **Recognize that people are the key resource.**
  The Service Quality organization rigorously looks for and hires people who are committed to excellence. Care, concern and courtesy to customers are as critical as experience and technical job skills. Management rewards and celebrates their service champions and encourages them to continue to work towards achieving excellence in Quality and Service.

Build the plan in three phases

- **Assess:** what your customers want and what they think of your service (The Service Audit).
- **Envision:** where your customers want you to be.
- **Plan:** to close the gap between where you are and where you want to be.

The diagram on the next page represents the three-phase approach developed by the **British Columbia Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations.**

Service Quality Plan Framework


STEPS
ISSUES
ACTIONS
WHERE ARE WE NOW?
A. Define Customers and Services
• What is our business?
• What products/services do we provide?
• Who are our internal customers?
• Who are our external customers?
• Who are our partners?
Map out your products and services by customer groups and partners
B. Assess Current State
• What are our customers' expectations and requirements?
• What do our customers say about our products and/or services?
• How does our organization support or hinder our ability to serve our customers?
Establish a way to obtain ongoing customer and employee feedback
Identify strengths and weaknesses in current state
WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?
A. Define Desired Future State
• What is our ministry's service quality vision? What are its objectives?
• What do our staff want our organization to be like?
• What will we look like when we are there?
• What will our customers say about us then?
Develop a set of specific service quality objectives with time frames
B. Identity Areas for Improvement
• How does the information obtained through our assessment(s) compare to our desired future state?
• What specific things can be done to address our weak areas?
• How will we know when we have achieved what is desired?
Develop a set of service quality goals
Set service standards for each goal
HOW CAN WE GET THERE?
A. Plan Improvements Toward Each Goal
To help us meet our goals:
• How will we get ongoing feedback from our customers? From our partners?
• What policies, procedures and forms need to be changed? What about other systems or administrative processes?
• What training is needed?
• How do we need to be organized to provide our services/products?
• What do we do that can be eliminated or made more efficient?
• What steps can be improved in our work process?
• What changes need to be made to our delegation of authority?
• Do we need to change the way we work with our partners?
• Do we need to change/improve the input we receive from the people who supply us with information, materials, etc.?
Map out current process for providing each service/product
Identify areas for potential improvement
Develop specific action plans to obtain these improvements and achieve service standards
Empower people to enact the plans
B. Support the Change
• How will we know that progress has been made?
• How can we support and recognize the people who are making the change happen?
• How can we make sure the change will last?
• How will we know what to work on next?
• How can we be sure that we will meet changing customer requirements?
• How can we build service quality into our hiring and orientation of new staff?
• How can our management continue to show its commitment to and support for service quality?.
Write our Service Quality Plan
Establish baselines, measure repeatedly and provide feedback about progress
Build service standards into performance appraisals and job descriptions
Build a meaningful recognition and reward program for teams & individuals
Conduct regular reviews of your achievement

Developed by Faye Schmidt, 1990

Is your organization committed to being customer-focused?

The matrix on the following page is your personal tool to help you assess your organization's present level of commitment to focusing on the customer. Please fill it out according to what you think best describes your organization.

Your score will give you an idea of its strengths and weaknesses. You will then have a better idea of where to begin.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AUDIT

How Does Your Organization Rate?

Customers Focus	Low	Score	(1)	Transition	Score	(2)	High	Score	(3)
1. CUSTOMERS IDENTIFIED	Unclear; Lacks definition			Some attempt to identify customers			Everyone in the organization has a clear understanding of who the customers are		
2. BUSINESS, SERVICE AND PARTNERS IDENTIFIED	Services not clearly defined. Poor relationships with other government agencies			Some attempt to describe organization's services to front line staff and to identify and work with partners			Thorough understanding of services communicated to all staff; Good working relationships with partners across government		
3. COMMITMENT TO SERVICE EXCELLENCE DEMONSTRATED	Not recognized			"Lets improve service;" mission statement communicated to staff			Customer focused mission statement, accepted and supported by all staff		
4. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION MEASURES IN PLACE	Customers complaints only form of feedback			Sporadic customer and/or staff surveys			Frequent measurement and feedback at the organization, employee, and customer levels		
5. SERVICE STANDARDS ESTABLISHED	None; not clear; performance not measured			Service standards not customers-driven; Occasional performance appraisals			Customer-driven standards established; Performance measured at all levels and reported regularly to all staff		
6. CUSTOMER FRIENDLY DELIVERY SYSTEMS IN PLACE	Policy & procedures driven by organizational needs; customer needs not recognized			Policies modified to permit some flexibility to meet customers requests; (Reactive)			Service delivery based on customers' needs. Frequent customer driven policy review; (Proactive)		
7. CUSTOMERS SERVICE TRAINING IN PLACE	None; Informal on the job training only			Training in customer service skills for front line only			Regular skills training and service/process improvement training for all staff to meet needs of internal and external customers		
8. STAFF EMPOWERED TO MEET CUSTOMER'S NEEDS	"Follow the Rules"			Some discretion given to managers only			Reduced bureaucracy; All staff especially front line, empowered to be flexible		
9. EMPLOYEES ARE RECOGNIZED AND REWARDED	No recognition: "Employee of the Month"			Occasional award ceremonies; Management driven; Part of performance appraisal			Service-focused team and individual awards ceremonies; Recipients performance determined by staff participation		
10 .SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN IN PLACE	None			Speeches/Slogans; One-shot effort			Service Plan includes goals to improve all 9 categories; All committed to continuous improvement in customer satisfaction		

Add up your scores

Low Customer Focus: 10-14
In Transition: 16-24
High Customer Focus: 25-30

Subtotal: A ☐ *Subtotal: B* ☐ *Subtotal: C* ☐

A + B + C = TOTAL ☐

Developed by Joan A. Barton 1991